

ASHFORD URBAN COUNCIL

**Medical Officer's Annual
Report, 1901.**

MR. CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

Herewith I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1901.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The Vital Statistics are this year, being a census year, computed upon the actual instead of the estimated population of the district, and are therefore specially interesting as being a means of comparing the health of our town with that of similar populations and also with the country generally.

Our estimated population, calculated upon the increase that actually took place between the census years 1881 and 1891, was 11,930.

Our actual population was found to be 12,808.

This means that the average increase in population during the last ten years has been very nearly double what it was in the preceeding ten.

As in former years I am comparing the statistics for the older part of the town, or North Ashford, with those of the newer part, or South Ashford, taking the South Eastern and Chatham Railway as the dividing line.

The total number of deaths registered in the district during the year was 159, which is equivalent to a death-rate of 12'41.

As, however, 3 of the deaths registered were non-residents in the district, whilst 6 residents died and were registered outside the district, the corrected figures should be 163, or a death-rate of 12'80.

This rate is very low for an urban population, and is much below that of the country generally.

Comparing North and South Ashford the rates are 12'89 and 11'50 respectively.

Opposite is given a table showing the number of deaths from various causes and the death-rate per thousand population from each.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	NORTH ASHFORD.	SOUTH ASHFORD.	TOTAL.	RATE PER 1,000 POPULA- TION.
Measles	2	2	4	.31
Whooping Cough . .	1	1	2	.15
Diphtheria	1	—	1	.078
Enteric Fever . . .	1	—	1	.078
Influenza	1	2	3	.23
Diarrhœa (epidemic) .	3	2	5	.39
Enteritis	2	2	4	.31
Erysipelas	—	1	1	.078
Phthisis	10	2	12	.93
Other Tubercular Diseases	3	1	4	.31
Cancer and Malignant Diseases }	8	4	12	.93
Bronchitis	6	4	10	.78
Pneumonia	1	3	4	.31
Pleurisy	2	—	2	.15
Alcoholism	1	1	2	.15
Premature Birth . .	10	1	11	.85
Heart Disease . . .	13	9	22	1.71
Accidents	5	—	5	.39
Suicide	1	—	1	.078
Other Causes	37	16	53	4.13
Total Death Rate .				

Comparing these figures with those for 1900 we find that there has been a diminution in the deaths from phthisis and respiratory diseases, but a slight increase in those due to malignant diseases.

THE INFANT MORTALITY, or deaths of children under one year of age per thousand births is 121·62, this is considerably below the average for the whole country which is about 134.

THE ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE, or death-rate from small-pox, measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, fever and diarrhoea, the seven principal zymotic diseases is 1·02, which is very low and therefore very satisfactory.

The number of births registered during the year was 296, which gives us a birth rate of 23·11.

The birth rate for North Ashford is 21·49 whilst that for South Ashford is 26·16. These figures are very low compared with the rate for the whole Kingdom.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year I received 29 notifications of infectious diseases, which may be considered a small number for the district. I have classified them and compared them with former years in the subjoined table.

	TOTAL.	NORTH ASHFORD.	SOUTH ASHFORD.	1900.	1899.	1898
Small Pox .	0	0	0	3	0	0
Diphtheria .	2	2	0	1	16	6
Erysipelas .	3	2	1	5	4	3
Scarlet Fever .	17	14	3	13	25	22
Enteric Fever .	7	5	2	1	19	15
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0	1	1	0

SCARLET FEVER.

Cases of this disease as usual form the bulk of the notifications received. There was, however, nothing like an epidemic outbreak of the disease at any time, but cases arose sporadically here and there at intervals.

It is a matter for congratulation that no less than 16 out of the 17 cases were treated in the Isolation Hospital, and it is no doubt in a great measure owing to the perfect isolation thus obtained that no cases of infection occurred from these sporadic cases.

ENTERIC FEVER.

Of the seven cases of this disease that occurred in the district during the year no less than five were traceable to the outbreak that arose in a neighbouring district, and were not therefore due to any sanitary defects in our town.

As regards non-notifiable infectious diseases, there does not appear to have been any serious outbreak during the year.

THE ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

During the year we have, I am glad to say, made further progress towards the erection of the proposed new Isolation Hospital.

A suitable site has been purchased, and plans have been drawn for the building, which now only await the sanction of the Local Government Board.

In the matter of the pollution of the river Stour and its remedy we have not been idle ; but as it has been found necessary to remodel our system of sewage disposal, a great many more points have had to be debated and considered than at first seemed necessary.

We hope early in the coming year to have elaborated a suitable plan for dealing with the whole matter in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

WATER SUPPLY.

I am pleased to be able to record that the analysis of our water continues to be most favourable.

During the past year, in addition to the usual quarterly chemical analysis, we had the water examined bacteriologically also.

The result showed that the water was entirely free from any suspicion of contamination with disease germs, thus strengthening the evidence of the chemical analysis.

During the year I have personally visited and investigated all the cases of infectious disease notified.

I have attended sixteen Sanitary Committee Meetings and four Council Meetings. I also had an interview with members of the Local Government Board concerning the plans for the new Isolation Hospital.

During the year I have also paid visits to the various common lodging houses and slaughter houses.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours very truly,

CLAUDE M. VERNON,

Medical Officer of Health.

